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UNCLAS ANKARA 001782

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TURKS REPLY ON SEEBRIG ASSURANCES

REF: 02 STATE 201017

1. This is an action message. Please see paragraph 3.

2. On March 17 polmiloff received a call from Oya Ergin of the MFA NATO Department. She informed that the GOT had almost completed its review of the Reftel text we had provided on October 16, 2002. When the review is complete, Post expects that there may be other issues for which we will request Department guidance. In the meantime, the Turks are concerned that if the USG insists on their using the word "agreement" in the MFA's response to the USG (as suggested in Reftel paragraph 7), Turkish law and practice will require that it be sent to the Prime Ministry for vetting and approval. Ergin predicted that going this route would take a "long time."

3. Action Request: At polmiloff's request, MFA provided its preferred text for our review. In lieu of "shall constitute an agreement," the GOT proposes that it use "will be considered as a political commitment." Post requests the Department's guidance on whether the GOT's choice of words is acceptable to the USG. End Action Request.

PEARSON